

From: Mill Life

On Assembly

I work on assembly
with Mrs Murray.

She once knew
Nelson Eddie
whoever he was.

Her son is a Corporal in the army
and a fine soldier.

Her sister was once
Queen For A Day
and
she said she wished
she could be
Queen For A Day
because she could use a new stove.

I wished I could have made her
Queen For A Day
just to make up for
a stooped back and arthritic hands
yet
I could do nothing but
pretend in awe
and call her lucky
to have known
Nelson Eddie

Death of a Foreman

Sam died on a Thursday
I know because
the clock said
Thursday.

The clock measured
days
as well as
hours.

They said he just collapsed.
I didn't see it.

Thelma and I at the time
were up to our ears
in
broken chain and grease.

I didn't know he had died.

I thought he had gone home
early
because I was leaving too
and they gave me his
card
to punch him out

on the hour.

Mill Life

We sat on the landing
Thelma and I
smoking Luckies
her Luckies.

She said she smoked
a pack a day
for sixteen years
and I felt better.

Green came out
and said
the machine was working again
and
Thelma spit
and told him to screw.
She didn't like Green.

In the field across the way
two children flew kites
and Thelma said
she liked to fly kites
but
the train car pulled in
blocking the view.

Thelma cursed the car
and
we went in
because
the machine was working again.

Joe

When happy
he laughs
a
full
hearted
and toothless
laugh
and sings out for the world to hear